

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

December 2, 2003

5:30 PM

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Sysyn, Pinard, Shea, DeVries

Messrs: R. MacKenzie, S. Maranto, P. Goucher, G. Lamberton, K. Dillon,
T. Lolicata

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Presentation by Director of Planning and Community Development
regarding department's duties, staffing and special projects.

Mr. Robert MacKenzie stated I know the Committee earlier this year in some of the discussions on consolidation wanted to get a little bit better idea of what we do in our office and how that compares perhaps to some other communities so I do have a short presentation. It is only seven slides. Hopefully you have copies of those in front of you in case you want to follow along. With me tonight I have Pamela Goucher, Deputy Director and Sam Maranto who is the team leader for the CIP program. This should take only about 15 minutes and then we can open it up to questions. I did think it was important to start with a mission statement of what our department is intended to do because it is fairly broad and sometimes I know when people ask me what do I do as a Planner it is sometimes hard to explain that but our mission statement is "The mission statement of the Planning and Community Development Department is to plan and manage the development of Manchester in a manner that insures a healthy economic base, safe and livable neighborhoods, a range of shopping and cultural opportunities and quality public facilities." One of the most important single parts of our job is insuring that projects in the City, new projects, contribute to the City rather than detract. You can have projects that are ill conceived and poorly executed and they detract from the neighborhood. They affect the tax base of the neighborhood and they affect the residents. On the other hand we strive for well-planned projects that are properly implemented and can really add to the City. Over time some people say well how can Manchester change much it is already built up? Manchester can change dramatically. Every year we have upwards of perhaps \$250,000,000

private and public projects in Manchester that if done properly and if planned out and done in a systematic way can really add to the community and make it change. I want to talk about the three primary functions of our department. On the left you see the Community Development, which is our CIP program. Really that is where we assist other departments, other City agencies, other non-profit agencies and the Aldermen in designing capital projects mainly but also special projects. We help them program it through the CIP process every year, which is now beginning and we do the project development and administration. That is a tremendous amount of paperwork that we have to do, particularly for all of the Federal programs. There are a number of Federal programs...HUD for example takes a considerable amount of our time because every project that happens and this year we have 167 projects in the CIP, for every HUD funded project we have to monitor and we have to make compliant with environmental reviews and we have to make sure they are doing construction in accordance with Davis Bacon and we are monitored by HUD every year in order to comply with that. I did want to ask Sam to maybe take two minutes and highlight some of the specific activities to give you an idea of what the staff does in the CIP program.

Mr. Sam Maranto stated on page 3 we have a staffing complement here and it shows that CIP has 4.5 staff people. Essentially that is made up of myself, Todd Fleming, Mena Gyawali and Robin Provencher. In addition, we have the equivalent of about half a person, which essentially other Planning staff members such as Bob and Judy Heminger and Dave Beauchesne do during the course of the year to provide assistance to CIP. In terms of CIP, I view it as having two primary responsibilities. The first being to capital budgeting. The CIP budget covers about four months of the fiscal year and is actually beginning this week. It goes from December through March. During that period, 100% of our attention is devoted towards discussing with other departments and other non-profit organizations what their request will be for the year. We meet with the various City departments to review what their priorities are. We conduct public hearings and meet with all of the non-profit agencies. Last year we had 37 different non-City agencies in who met with us and gave us presentations. That resulted in 49 new projects. Bob mentioned that we have 167 new projects. At any given time we could have hundreds of projects going and during the course of the year it is our responsibility to insure that those projects stay on course in terms of progress and that money is expended in accordance with the schedule for them. The other major responsibility we have is working with funds that come through the Department of Housing Urban Development. That brings in additional responsibilities for oversight of Federal rules and regulations. I believe many of you are familiar with CDBG funds. We get approximately \$3 million during the course of a year and we are responsible to insure that it is expended properly. In April and May we have to put together what we can an annual review plan, which is basically a plan similar to the CIP. It is actually a component of the entire City

side budget, which details how we are going to spend our Federal money. In July basically we then initiate projects and conduct training and provide technical assistance to all City departments and non-profit organizations relative to how to go about starting projects and helping them with procurement of architects and contractors. We develop contracts. That takes place in June and July. In August and September CIP starts and we have to put together HUD's new performance report. That is done and copies are made for the full Board each year. That essentially indicates to HUD what we did during the past year. During the course of the year we have to monitor projects. We got out and do auditing of organizations. We provide technical assistance as I noted. We also work on special projects, which includes the senior center and the Gale Home, the Families in Transition Housing project. A significant amount of our time right now is focused on housing, which is critical to the economic stability of the community and as such a lot of our time is spent working with organizations to create housing or advocate for housing. Also during the course of the year we have other duties, such as financial oversight. We have to reconcile our projects with the ETE system, but also with HUD. We spend a lot of our time making sure that both of those programs are similar and reconciled. We also, as some of you are aware, we do special projects. All in all I have had I guess the benefit of having staff with me working for the past three years and I believe we have a great staff. We do have some statistics here relative to other communities and I might note that our staff of 4.5 compared to other communities that have 12 to 15 people doing what our 4.5 do I think is something to be proud of.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I will note that with regards to HUD programs that the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development actually uses a lot of our forms and procedures as kind of models for other communities – environmental review record and others HUD has used and recognized in the past. The next major program area is Growth Management. I know that we have two members of the Planning Board here so they will know much about what the Planning Board is doing. We also provide support to the Heritage Commission, Millyard Design Review Committee and we provide financial support and handle the records of the Conservation Commission. Of course we also provide support to various committees of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, particularly CIP, Lands and Buildings and a couple of others. Right now I did want to mention that as you may know some of the more difficult community decisions are these land use development decisions. When you have major multi-million dollar projects coming into neighborhoods it can be frustrating for the neighborhoods and it can be frustrating for the developers and the owners. It is really our role to manage that and make sure that the neighborhood issues are brought out and to make sure that we address as many of those as possible and make sure that in the end we have a good project for the City. I did want to ask Pamela to kind of give you an

idea of some of the projects that are handled by the Planning Board and by the staff

Ms. Pam Goucher stated during this past year, the year 2003, the department has seen about 40 site plans or about 40 sub-division plans that have come through this department and gone through the Planning Board for review. We have had about 30 site plans, 15 planned developments, 30 conditional use permits, numerous mergers and the like. As Bob said certainly Alderman DeVries and Alderman Sysyn are well aware of them because we have had many very late night meetings as we will have again this Thursday night. I think part of what Bob was hoping I could relay to this Committee is some of the work that the Board sees happening, the Board may not be aware of all of the intricacies that follow with these projects over time. Three projects in particular I think the Board is fairly well aware of – LedgeWood off of Candia Road. That is a manufacturing housing development for retired people. It is 149 home sites. That project was approved in May 2001 with about 13 conditions imposed by the Planning Board and as of right now, December 2003, we are about 2/3 of the way through the project as far as the sites being developed and we probably will be working through that project through next summer and when I say we are working through it what I mean to imply is just because the Planning Board approved it in May 2001 doesn't mean the project is done. There is a fair amount of time on the part of the staff to follow through and make sure that the conditions that the Board imposed on the project are actually included, whether they be in the form of additions to plans or any voluntary contributions or whatever the Board has imposed we need to make sure they are in place before we sign the plan. Once the plan is signed then this department takes on the role of making sure that the permits that they would apply for with the Building Department are in conformance with what was represented through the process. We have been out to the LedgeWood site on numerous occasions and it will continue as I said through the winter and spring. In the beginning there was a need for us to be out there for some of the calls from the citizens and the abutters asking about blasting and things of that nature. Right now it is just follow-through, follow-up and making sure they are doing what they committed to do. Even though it was two and a half years ago that the Planning Board first saw it, this department is still watching over this particular project. Another project, a fairly large one that was approved by the Board in February 2002 was the Waterford Apartment Complex of approximately 384 units. That is progressing fairly nicely but since February 2002 I have been out there on numerous occasions following through with making sure that the site was conforming with what the plan said and on a few occasions an Alderman got some calls from constituents concerned about the wetlands because there are a fair amount of wetlands in that area and he has joined us on a couple of site walks up there to make sure that they are, in fact, doing what they said they would do and are protecting the wetlands, which is particularly important throughout the City

but with a project that has so many wetlands incorporated it is very important that we follow-through with that process. Manchester Commons, the recent Shaw's project that opened up a few weeks ago...I think everybody here is fairly aware of that project. That project got its original approvals in February 2002 by this Board. It also had some approvals by the Zoning Board prior to that date. Since February 2002 that project has been back to the Zoning Board three times and back to the Planning Board three more times for a total of eight visits to both Boards I believe and while it is progressing and things are moving ahead, on the staff's end it has taken a lot of time to make sure that subsequent plans for approvals both from the Zoning Board and Planning Board are in compliance and conformance with what they represented and we need to make sure that we are keeping track of approved plans. As we go out there and monitor what they are doing to make sure that again it is in conformance it is a fair amount of staff time. That particular project had a component of a voluntary contribution with the Rails to Trails and Alderman DeVries has been involved with that group of people and has also been fairly involved with trying to make sure that the developer again follows through on any commitments. So I guess on those three projects alone, which are only a few of the hundred or so different types of projects that we have seen this year, there is still a fair amount of work that we need to do for follow-up and even though we put together a package like this for the Planning Board, whether it be for a public hearing or a business meeting, as they approve plans they are ongoing. They are not done when the Planning Board signs off on them. There is a fair amount of follow-up. Our active boards in our department are fairly full because we are constantly making sure that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Regarding staff, Bob has computed 4.5, which includes besides myself, Terry Harlacher and Louise Donnington who are involved with the growth management and projects before the Planning Board pretty much 90% to 95% of their time and then we also have help from Carolyn Michaud, who listens to all of those hours of tapes and transcribes them for the Board and for the public and a couple of other staff people also have some involvement. Other than trying to keep the process flowing and going smoothly and answering the questions of the applicants and developers, what the Growth Management component really has to deal with on a daily basis is an average between the three Planners that are largely involved with this we each get somewhere between 12 and 20 phone calls a day and anywhere from 8-10 regularly scheduled meetings a week and that might be with applicants, developers, engineers or it might be someone from the general public who has called and said I have this building what can I do with it or I have this land what can I do with it and then in addition we get a great deal of what we call the drop-ins from the public who don't necessarily have an appointment but they have a lot of questions and one of the three of us tries to make ourselves available to speak with them. Very often it is a confusing process. They don't understand why they can't just go and get a CO to occupy so I think it is important that we try to have a friendly face to them so that even though it is a

process that is foreign to them we try to make it somewhat friendly so that hopefully they understand that we are just trying to conform with State statutes and do what the ordinance says we need to do. I think that is about it.

Mr. MacKenzie stated the third category is long-range planning and special projects. This includes such things as the City's Master Plan, which we should be attacking. It was last done in 1993 and should be updated and I am going to talk a little bit more about that in a minute. Right now I want to move on to the next page, which is staff assignment. As Sam and Pamela mentioned, the CIP program has the equivalent of 4.5 people. For Growth Management, which is Planning Board primarily but also some services to Bills on Second Reading, 4.5 people. We have one person doing Heritage Commission, Millyard Design Review Committee, Lands and Buildings reports and the Geographic Information System. That is one person. We currently have nobody assigned to long-range planning or special projects right now and we have the equivalent of one person devoted to management and administration and that is kind of broken down between myself and Judy Heminger, who is our office manager and Sam and Pamela. In total, doing regular work we have 11 people. Also attached to our staff is the Grants Writer, which is temporarily funded and the Urban Ponds Restoration person, which is not funded out of City monies but that is required by the EPA and DES. They are both attached to our department but they are dedicated people and we can't use them for regular planning purposes. On the next page we did a survey of planning staff in other comparable cities in New England and I guess I recognize that we have a heavy workload currently but frankly looking at the numbers was still kind of shocking for me. This particular chart shows how many planning staff there are per 10,000 population. We have a population of about 110,000 people. We have 11 planning staff. That is one planner per 10,000 people. You can see going up the list here the closest one to us was the City of Quincy, MA, which is about 88,000 people. They had the same number of planners but roughly 20,000 fewer population. You can see the actual amount of planners grow until you have a number of cities that have over four planners per 10,000 people. Cities such as Cambridge, MA, which has less population than Manchester, has 43 planners for what we were doing. We have 11 and they have 43. The City of Lowell, MA has 45 planning staff. Again, the same thing that we are doing with 11 staff people. I did look at some smaller cities just to see how they would compare. Burlington, VT and Portsmouth, NH. Interestingly, Portsmouth has the same number of planning staff as us but 1/5 the population. Again, they have the same planning staff. We have 110,000 people and they have 20,000 people. I think this is important to recognize. We have tried to do what we could for the Board and for the required projects that we have had in the past but frankly at this point we are understaffed and we have had trouble addressing a lot of the special projects that you have wanted. I did want to kind of highlight the projects on the next page that have been asked of us to do. A couple of these are projects that we felt because of the Master Plan we should be doing. I did just want to run through these and list

these. Our difficulty right now is that we have no planners in the slot of long-range planning or special projects so these are done either by me or by other staff people as they can catch time. Frankly right now 98% of the staff time is devoted to our regular duties so we have very little time to do these special projects. We have been assisting on the property sales. The Board had directed us to work, for example, on Old Wellington Road. The Senior Center. We have moved out of our main phase on the Senior Center, although we are still assisting with coordination and fundraising. We have several rezonings that we are working through right now and I think several of the Aldermen know those particular rezonings. We were required to do Arena Area Design Guidelines as part of the zoning overlay. That is actually coming to completion and we will be mailing copies of that in the next three weeks. We are assisting on the Riverfront Project in terms of planning and the regulatory process. We are trying to update the impact fee ordinance that the Planning Board asked us to do. The zoning lookback provisions. We are now well behind where we should have been. We should have provided that a year after the new zoning ordinance was passed and it is now over two years. We recognize that we are behind. The Hackett Hill Master Plan. The Hackett Hill area is the last opportunity to add real land area to the City, taxable land area. We think it is important to get the Board to adopt the Hackett Hill Master Plan and we have been working with MEDO to prepare that and bring it back to the Board hopefully within the next four weeks. Second Street redevelopment area has been identified as a key redevelopment area that we should be doing neighborhood planning on. The Green Mill redevelopment is the old Mailways Mill building on Second Street. There is a group interesting in redeveloping that building and turning it into apartments and first floor retail and we are assisting in various ways with that group and with that redevelopment. Neighborhood planning. Many of the cities that I mentioned such as Cambridge that has 43 planners or Lowell that has 45 planners has a very strong neighborhood planning program. They probably have five or six different neighborhoods where they are doing different neighborhood planning activities. We simply have not had the staff or the luxury of doing that even though I think it is important to do in Manchester. I am going to keep running through the list of special projects. Hands Across the Merrimack. We are working with a non-profit organization, a committee that is trying to rebuild the old trestle bridge over the Merrimack River into a trail system and connect it to the Riverwalk and the Piscataquog Trail. We are assisting MHRA in the redevelopment of the Gale Home. We are trying to find ways to look at updating the Master Plan. We know that is important, particularly to the Planning Board but I think we agree that it is important as well. We have been requested by the Board to look at finding a location for the Amoskeag Rowing Club so we are looking for a boathouse location. We should be working on the Brown School looking at its future disposition and what should probably be done with that. We are required to do a hazard mitigation plan by the Federal government, FEMA, and we will be working on that with other City

departments. Different departments have asked for assistance in zoning. You can see here there is Manchester Water Work, the Highway Department and even the Airport Authority is looking for zoning changes. We have not had the staff to do that and now I see that some of those departments are starting to hire either their own staff or consultants to do that work. Ultimately that may cost the City more. If we don't have the staff to do it and it has to get done, somebody else gets paid to do it. The Planning Board has been working on a lighting program. We have been assisting the Board on that. Finally out of this particular list there has been a signage package that the Chamber of Commerce and others have been supporting but we have not had the time recently to bring that forward. That is a quick look at the special projects. Unfortunately we can attack only maybe three or four of those special projects at a time. In summary, if I could just read this, more than ever growth of the City and decisions on capital investment and special projects create heated public debate within a complex environment of regulations, law and multiple decision makers. Addressing these matters in a fair and comprehensive way that understands the implications for Manchester of the next generation requires a team approach to problem solving. The Planning and Community Department is committed to building a solution team that works with all groups to come up to a fair resolution to these issues. I think you all understand how difficult some of these development issues are and some of these public facilities, whether that is the Senior Center or whether that is Manchester Commons these are complex, frustrating and difficult decisions to make but we are committing to make that happen. Realistically, however, the current staff levels cannot address all of those planning and development issues and opportunities in Manchester. Our budget has been cut the last couple of years. Frankly we don't complain about it. We get a lot of work done. I am amazed at how much work my staff does, particularly compared to other staff that have two to three times the number of people doing the same task as our people. I am certainly impressed. We have great teams that work together but ultimately you may have to help us decide whether we attack these other special projects and things such as the Master Plan but presently we don't have the staff to do that. At this point I would be happy to answer questions of the Committee.

Chairman Lopez stated I think it was a very good presentation and it makes us understand a lot and I think that it is an exercise that we wanted to get through tonight because even I personally call and ask about projects and how long it takes and all of that stuff and I think we have to be aware of that. In reference...do we have Planners in other departments? Have you analyzed with the HR Director?

Mr. MacKenzie responded the only one that I am aware of is I think the Airport Authority is looking to hire a Planner. Parks & Recreation has a Project Planner, which is a little bit different. Chuck Diprima does project planning with them and

goes through the design process but I think the Airport Authority is now looking to hire a land use planner to work on zoning and other planning issues in that area.

Alderman Lopez asked but in that line and maybe that is not a discussion for tonight but maybe that is an area where that position could be shared 50/50 with the City where you are at least given 50% of the time. Having a Planner just for the Airport when the City is suffering in the Planning Division that might be an area that you want to discuss with the Mayor before anything comes of it. I think the problem that we have and I don't know how we can correct it and you may want to take it back but on a lot of these special projects they are of interest in wards and City overhaul. Is there some type of mechanism that you could devise to give us an update maybe on a monthly or quarterly basis as to where these projects stand and what the problems are? Sometimes the problems don't come to us. I think it is important that we understand what the problems are in order to make a policy decision and guide the City. I think that is where a lot of us get what is happening in this area and what is going on in this area and why isn't this done. We all understand that you are directed by the CEO and everybody else but I think if we know what the problem really is as to why projects aren't really getting done then we can do something along the line of maybe calling another department in or whatever the case may be. Have you looked at any type of CDBG funds or anything along that line as far as...I know that Bill Jabjiniak is being paid not from City funds but can we do something along that line that can help you out?

Mr. MacKenzie responded we may look at that more seriously this year. We tried not to eat into those funds because then we use it for other projects but it may be getting to the point where there is a lot of work to be done and there are a lot of great opportunities right now and that could be an opportunity to fund either a half a Planner or something so I would like to explore that.

Alderman Lopez stated I guess my last question before I turn it over to the Committee is we talked about consolidation a little bit on the economic division moving over and you reorganizing. Would that help you?

Mr. MacKenzie responded what I did find interesting in going over and talking to a number of these other cities is they do seem to be moving in that direction. I know that some communities, like Providence recently merged a couple of their departments including Economic Development and Planning. It is not something that we are actively looking for at this point, although there are a number of projects that we both work on together on probably a daily basis. I would leave it up to the Board if you want to explore that again but we are not out there actively pursuing it. We do see other cities moving in that direction and certainly on projects like Hackett Hill or the Arena Area planning or even Second Street

revitalization those are areas that you could get some cross fertilization from the two departments working together.

Alderman Shea stated I have a few questions. The first question is the cost to operate your department during the past five years and changes in staff/personnel. In other words, could you give a brief description of how many people worked in your department five years ago and compare that with how many are working now?

Mr. MacKenzie responded yes. Five years ago we had the equivalent of 13.5 staff members. We are currently at 11. Our budget was up over \$1 million a year and is now down to a little over \$900,000 a year.

Alderman Shea asked what has the impact of the Yarger Decker implementation had on your operations. In other words has that added operational costs to your department that prior to that implementation, weren't there? That is always a concern that we all have in terms of the escalation of salaries and cost of City benefits and so forth.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I guess I can answer that. There are really two parts of Yarger Decker that really affected us. One was converting our department from 35 hours a week to 40 hours a week. Actually I think that was beneficial. We have gotten more staff productivity per person and rather than hiring and training new people I think that was a positive part. It did cost us more but that was a positive part of it. Yarger Decker does provide more opportunities for increases for individuals, annual promotions where you might not have gotten annual promotions before and yes that has had additional impacts on our budget.

Alderman Shea asked just to review the 13.5 down to 11 the addition of those five hours were tend to somewhat compensate for the reduction of some staff members. If you had 13 people and you had...how many of those people worked 45 hours rather than now working 40?

Mr. MacKenzie answered that 13.5 was the equivalent of a regular formally 35 hour week so you get an extra 5 hours, which translates to 1/7, which is...

Alderman Shea interjected well I am not sure how many people were affected or impacted by that. If there were five people working 35 hours that would mean that is an extra 25 hours. If there were 10 people that would be an extra 50 hours of course.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I think there were three people that did not get the bump because they were salary, including myself, so we did not get the raises but there were probably nine or ten people on the staff that did.

Alderman Shea asked so in essence since you have gone to 40 hours that more or less is the same as 13.5 people working or 10 people working we will say 35 hours and now you are up to 11 people but they are working 40 hours so that would probably...

Mr. MacKenzie interjected I would say that was probably the equivalent of adding one person. Relatively speaking it brought us back from 11 to 12.

Alderman Shea stated you mentioned that the City's Master Plan hasn't been updated I think since 1992. I don't know if you used that particular date but is there any necessity on the part of your department to update it. Is there a Federal mandate to do that? Are we out of compliance because that hasn't been done?

Mr. MacKenzie responded the State recommends that Master Plans be updated every five years. Unlike some states like Florida where it is mandatory, in New Hampshire it is only recommended. I do find generally that communities tend to update it every 10 years; realistically every 10 years so we are at the point now where we should be updating it.

Alderman Shea asked what is the force of not following the recommendation. Are there any penalties?

Mr. MacKenzie answered there is no penalty, however, if you get taken to court for a zoning issue the courts will look at your Master Plan and see if it is relatively up-to-date or not or if the zoning is consistent with the Master Plan. So it is likely if we get taken to court more and they start looking at the Master Plan it may start to hurt us in that we don't have an up-to-date Master Plan.

Alderman Shea stated I have one other question. There is a listing of several different projects that obviously you are not able to perform or do simply because you do not have the personnel but if one were to say...if we were to be given what the main types of projects that can't be realized might be and how these might be achieved I think that would be very helpful in terms of planning or budgetary considerations and things like that. That is really what I am talking about.

Mr. MacKenzie responded I understand.

Alderman DeVries stated certainly I have a few questions for you also, Bob, and first I think I would like to comment. The Airport Planner that has been discussed in the past, I believe the current status of that is they did hire two additional people that they felt would free up some other individuals to work on Airport related issues for the surrounding area but they still need to pertain directly to the Airport because of the Federal funds involved there. I don't believe they did actually add the staff person that I was hoping for for specific Airport Planner to assist with specifically Ward 8 issues. As you know it probably took me about two months into my first term of office to realize that there were portions of the City that were and I guess I will use the term neglected for lack of the appropriate staff to assist in planning because there are so many other special projects and so many other demands on your staff's time. Certainly I was very vocal in saying that I would love to have more assistance in planning for what I perceive to be the second gateway into the City, which would be the Airport. It certainly is a gateway that we have not provided for and have not looked to make sure that we are maximizing that first appearance of so many individuals into the City and there are many other concerns that could be addressed as well. Some of those are Airport related and I am hoping that if we further conversation with Kevin Dillon there might be some assistance there but I don't think that specific Planner was ever put on staff. I am wondering, though, to continue the conversation of the staffing that we have in the City versus other cities did you take a look to see because I know there are a lot of functions that we end up having to go out to consultants to obtain the services. Have you tried to compare to see what dollars we are spending here in the City on consultant fees that other cities are doing in-house services to update several of the State recommended projects?

Mr. MacKenzie responded I haven't done that. That is probably a little bit hard to get a handle on, although I have to say that even in those other cities they do have consultants as well. Even with a staff of 40 people they still have consultants so I am not sure I could say that if we hired two more Planners we would save a lot of money on consultant fees because there are some times very specific things that you have to hire consultants for but I haven't really done any analysis of that.

Alderman DeVries asked when you took a look at the other cities did you do that through websites or did you have actual contact with them.

Mr. MacKenzie answered we checked websites and contacted other departments to see what was going on and what their staffing levels were.

Alderman DeVries asked did you find that the websites were detailed enough that you could really take a look and ascertain that you were comparing apples to apples from departments or are they just spreading their services differently where

as you suggested we have today Highway and Economic Development doing pieces of the pie.

Mr. MacKenzie replied if we couldn't get it off the website because...several cities now have economic development planners on their planning staff so we tried to factor that out. If it wasn't evident on the website we actually went and talked to them and tried to make sure that we could compare apples to apples.

Alderman DeVries asked is it possible for you to delineate that and I know that you don't have a whole lot of time to give to this but is it possible for you to give us a little better representation of the findings from looking at some of the other cities and maybe noting some of the specific positions that you felt were being fulfilled within those cities that are not duplicated anywhere in our City.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes.

Alderman DeVries stated I think it would be an interesting project for us to see. There is one other committee that I sat on and I guess I have been concerned that there probably has not been follow-up and that is the CEDS Committee and I noticed that we have Jane Hills in the back of the room. There were several broad and a few specific recommendations that were made by the different sub-committees within the CEDS, which is the Community Economic Development Strategy. I am just wondering has anybody spent time doing any sort of follow-through on the recommendations that were made to see if there are any easy steps that could be fulfilled specific to retaining businesses? There were some very easy recommendations.

Mr. MacKenzie responded we did have a person on the CEDS Committee, Louise, but I do have to say in looking at other cities that we compete against...I mean the City of Cambridge has 10 economic development people. Cambridge is actually smaller than Manchester. Providence, Rhode Island had 10 economic development people. We have one in Manchester. We have Jane who is working on Economic Development. Bill Jabjiniak is attached to the Mayor's Office and does special projects but we really have one person in the economic development office so whether or not that would be part of the Planning Department it is irrelevant because we don't...we are not as competitive with those other cities in terms of having the right economic development people...enough economic development people doing that job.

Alderman DeVries stated I have one final question and this actually started at the beginning of your presentation, which was a little bit broader in nature in dealing with the mission statement and what Planning tries to accomplish. You mentioned that you spend time trying to assist in managing neighborhood issues. There has been one frequent offshoot of many of the recent proposals that have been before

us that have discussed the traffic issues involved and I think recently you even touched on some new thoughts that there might be in developing some new traffic calming techniques that the City may apply and I am just wondering since we are here in this forum today if you could elaborate once again for more of these members to here some of your thoughts on traffic calming and a direction that we might want to pursue if you could.

Mr. MacKenzie replied it is ironic because the other day I came across a traffic calming proposal that we wrote and it turned out it was about 10 years ago but we have not really done anything because we don't have the staff to do it but other cities are picking up on the concept. I think other cities are recognizing that in order to have the type of economic development they have to protect the neighborhoods or the neighborhoods are going to resist any more commercial development. So if you want to develop your commercial and economic base and the best example is South Willow Street. We still get opposition to changes in that area because their number one frustration is with the traffic that comes through the neighborhoods. If we could somehow address their concerns and now I see the City of Concord is working on traffic calming to protect some of their neighborhoods, I think it would be much easier to work on the economic development and encourage industrial and commercial expansion if we could protect those neighborhoods.

Alderman DeVries stated I guess I would just have one follow-up to that and certainly I think that is one area that we cannot continue to overlook. It is a need that we need to fulfill somehow and I would just impress upon the rest of the Board members here tonight that somehow that is a need that the City needs to work on to address and to adopt some of the proposals that have been brought forward in surrounding communities or even in other parts of the country because we need to be more innovative in our traffic calming and it has to be part of the proposal that is initiated at the Planning Board level. It is my belief that when the projects come before it, it is initiated before the traffic occurs and not as an afterthought when the complaints come rolling in.

Chairman Lopez stated just a final observation. One thing intrigues me. You mentioned staff. Have we submitted anything to the HR Director for more staff or have we submitted just through the budget process?

Mr. MacKenzie responded we have just submitted through the budget process for additional staff. I can understand the budget problems that the Board has faced the last couple of years but we have not, otherwise, requested for staff other than in the budget process because we don't have the money.

Chairman Lopez replied I realize that. I am just wondering if we are missing out as a City and the major projects that we throw upon Planning is there some way whether it be CDBG money or along that line where we could have somebody I think that is important to get some of these projects done. Otherwise, what we do is we continue to keep piling them up and depending on the majority of the Aldermen that want this project it moves to the top and everything else keeps going to the bottom and the Master Plan then becomes 10 years old. I would like for you to look at that area and bring to our attention the verification and justification as to what we need and how we can accomplish some of the things you mentioned in your presentation because I think some of them are very important, especially the Master Plan. We have to tackle that somehow.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Report of Committee on Community Improvement referring proposal from the Public Works Department regarding a new Facilities Division.

Chairman Lopez stated on this particular item I would ask the Committee to table this and refer it to the HR Director for review and comment.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard it was voted to table this item.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, seeking transfer of funds for continuation of the Group Benefit Strategies contract.

Alderman Pinard moved to approve the transfer of funds. Alderman DeVries duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Shea asked to justify the expenditure could you explain why it is necessary and how much benefit the individuals who work for Group Benefit Strategies did have on our last budget please.

Ms. Ginny Lamberton stated we were very fortunate two years ago when we first put our health insurance out to bid to find this company. The whole field of insurance is very specialized and I am not a specialist in insurance and analysis of all of the things that those people know how to analyze. They helped us dramatically as we negotiated our contract a year ago last spring between Anthem

and two other insurance companies and got the rates down, the administrative rates down a lot better than I would have been able to because they speak the same language and that helped. During the last year they have been working with us in analyzing our expenditures and literally meeting with our employee groups. They have been working with me to try to get Anthem to give us our rebates on prescriptions, which Anthem refuses to do. I want to put the health insurance back out to bid again and part of getting the award will be that you will give us the rebates or at least you will share the rebates with us and according to the consultants that Group Benefit Strategies hired that would bring in another \$150,000 to maybe \$300,000 to the City because our expenditures for prescriptions, because remember we self-insure, I think it is almost \$4 million. That is a lot of money we are spending on prescriptions so I would really like to put it out to bid again. The insurance rules or laws have changed in this State and the politics behind that was to bring more insurance companies wanting to do business in the State so hopefully we would have more responses to our bid this time. Additionally, I just found out yesterday that...you know we are doing our budget projections for the next budget cycle so I asked Delta Dental if they could give me a guesstimate as to what they think our rates will increase to and nobody likes to do that at this time of year because really the year is not even half over yet so the answer to that was well expect probably 10% but to be safe budget 12%. Well that is 6% more than we did this year so I am thinking well maybe we ought to put the dental out too and again Group Benefit Strategies, I pay them a flat fee if they work 100,000 hours or 20,000 they get the same amount of money. They are great. Right now frankly they have been in good faith...they continue to come to New Hampshire when we ask them to come. They have done some analysis for me. I call them and I get an immediate response from them and I haven't paid them a nickel this fiscal year.

Alderman Shea asked so your justification is that we are getting much more from them than we are paying them for their service.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes and actually for some reason the President of the company, Jack Sherry, likes Manchester. He has given us the best deals I have ever...you know when we started out for our second round of contracts he said I won't do any business with you for anything less than \$60,000. I said well I only have \$30,000 and that is what I had and that is what he ended up coming to. He has been really good about treating Manchester very well.

Alderman DeVries asked the State of New Hampshire recently made a switch from Anthem back to CIGNA is that correct.

Ms. Lamberton answered that is correct.

Alderman DeVries asked do you feel that that would actually make it advantageous for us as we go back out to bid because at least with Anthem I think there was a problem where we became a little fish and maybe we are becoming a big fish in their pond again.

Ms. Lamberton answered I think that it is important to keep our provider on their toes to give us the best deal we can get from them. Remember we self-fund so our claims are coming out of our account but our administrative fees, our stop-loss insurance and again the old prescription rebates are money that we want to negotiate very hard with them so I think maybe it would be...I know it would be to our advantage to put it back out to bid again.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, on behalf of Kevin Dillon, Airport Director, requesting the establishment of an additional full-time microcomputer systems specialist at Labor Grade 19.

Alderman Shea moved to approve this request. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion.

Alderman DeVries asked is it possible since Kevin is here for him to elaborate on the duties.

Mr. Kevin Dillon stated right now at the Airport we have two computer folks that run that entire section. They take care of not only the Airport and City of Manchester computer system at the Airport but also deal with all of the airline systems that are tied into the building – the maintenance of the flight information display system. They also have to maintain the computerized access control system, which is a security system for every door and entry point at the Airport and because of the growth at the Airport the workload there has just increased greatly and it is really not a workload that two people can handle anymore so we are really looking to bring in this additional position to add a third body to that section.

Chairman Lopez called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Lopez stated just a note for the public watching this, this is a Enterprise position and doesn't cost the taxpayers any money.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, requesting that a previously approved reclassification of a Laborer position to Laborer-Drop Off Facility be amended to reclassify one Refuse Collector, Salary Grade 12, to the title of Drop Off Facility Worker, Salary Grade 12.

On motion of Alderman Sysyn, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to approve the request.

Chairman Lopez addressed Item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from Michael D. Roche requesting to appear before the committee to explain in detail why the City is not an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Chairman Lopez stated for the Committees information I talked to Mike Roche. He has given me a letter. I would like to pass it on to the HR Director for her to review it and give an answer and check into the different procedures as to City policies and whether they were followed. Some of the questions here I don't know if she can answer but I am sure she can review the whole thing and give this Committee a review of what is happening in the personnel area. I really don't want to get into the personnel aspects of this because this has to be both parties and I would like the HR Director to review it to make sure that we are on solid ground before we start talking publicly about personnel issues.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries it was voted to refer this item to the HR Director.

Alderman DeVries stated can I just ask if Ginny Lamberton might be able to give Mike some sort of a reference for a timeframe. Is this a month long process? I am not trying to tie you down, I was just wondering.

Chairman Lopez responded well she hasn't seen the letter apparently and there are quite a few questions on here so I think she will analyze it and answer the ones that she can answer under the City ordinances and stuff like that but then there are other complicated questions that deal with equal employer and all of that stuff.

Alderman DeVries asked and that will be reported back to this Committee correct.

Chairman Lopez answered yes and at the same time she will give a...after the Committee reviews it she will give a response to Michael Roche.

Alderman Shea stated with all due respect this Committee may not be in existence.

Chairman Lopez responded well anything that is tabled at the end of the year will be referred to the new Committee so it will still be on the table when the new Committee takes over and any one of us can have input as to what transpires. Clerk Thibault provided a hand out to Committee members regarding the tabled item.

TABLED ITEM

Communication from the HR Director on behalf of Tom Lolicata requesting approval of revisions to seven Traffic Department class specifications as follows:

- Deputy Traffic Director
- Traffic Director
- Traffic Maintenance Supervisor
- Traffic Maintenance Worker I & II
- Traffic Sign Painter
- Traffic Signals Supervisor
- Traffic Signals Technician

to provide that the positions may handle hazardous waste and receive proper training.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Mr. Tom Lolicata stated Ms. Lamberton and myself got together and she concurs that the Director and Deputy Director should not be included.

Ms. Lamberton responded so basically what my letter is saying is please revise my original letter to delete the changes for the Director position and the Deputy Director position. No change in those class specifications, just the class specifications that continue to be listed. That is what we are trying to do.

On motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to approve the ordinance with the above changes.

Chairman Lopez asked are we going to bring some of these items in to the meeting tonight.

Clerk Thibault answered no.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson asked do you want some of them.

Chairman Lopez answered yes we want Item 5 and Item 6.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson stated on Item 5 that may require...I believe that requires a Resolution so we wouldn't be able to bring that in without...I mean we can bring it into the Board but it still going to require a Resolution at the next meeting.

Chairman Lopez asked can we bring it in and get permission for Ginny to proceed with the process.

Deputy City Clerk Johnson answered yes if the Committee wants us to bring it in in that format we could certainly do that and the Board could approve the transfer and then the Resolution would follow but that way she could proceed with the process.

Chairman Lopez stated we also want Item 6 brought in and Item 7.

Ms. Lamberton responded actually Item 7 is to...

Deputy City Clerk Johnson interjected that is already on the agenda. We will be taking care of that.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee